

**Proclamation 4783 of August 25, 1980**

**White Cane Safety Day, 1980**

**By the President of the United States of America**

**A Proclamation**

In every activity of daily life, most of us depend upon our sight. We take for granted the ability to wend our way through the woods, dodge children and bicycles on the sidewalk, and navigate around cars at busy intersections. As a result, we rarely stop to consider that these everyday activities can be hazardous to the six million Americans who are blind or partially sighted.

Fortunately, visually handicapped people have a distinctive tool available to them which can help in these potentially dangerous situations. That tool is a white cane.

Using the cane as an extension of the body, a sightless person can explore unfamiliar environments, locate landmarks, and find a path free of obstacles. Thanks to this simple aid, millions of visually handicapped persons are able to move about their communities with a degree of independence that would otherwise be denied them.

As valuable as the white cane is, however, it cannot warn its user of hazards more than a few feet away. It cannot detect rapidly moving vehicles, joggers, and young people on roller skates. Therefore, we must all be alert to the needs of people who carry the white cane. Often a gesture as simple as yielding the right-of-way to a visually handicapped person, or offering assistance when it seems to be needed, can make the difference between a safe journey and a hazardous one. In this way, we can help visually handicapped people overcome the difficulties that threaten to limit the freedom of movement that all of us value so highly. To heighten public awareness of the importance of the white cane to the independence and safety of blind and partially sighted Americans, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved October 6, 1964 (78 Stat. 1003; 36 U.S.C. 169d) has authorized the President to proclaim October 15 of each year as White Cane Safety Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JIMMY CARTER, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1980, as White Cane Safety Day.

I urge all Americans to observe this day by reflecting on the accomplishments of the blind and visually handicapped, by showing sensitivity to the rights and needs of all handicapped citizens, and by resolving to aid them in their continuing struggle for independence.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifth.

JIMMY CARTER